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SUBJECT: Goma Report January 7, 2008 -
Second day of Kivus Conference

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Kivus Conference, which opened January 6 in Goma, will probably not get down to substance for a few days and is likely to continue later than the projected finish date of January 14. The relative satisfaction of Tutsis with their prominent role in the Conference is in contrast to the dissatisfaction of other ethnicities. Conference president Malu Malu envisions a role for representatives of the international community in breaking logjams within the 64 sub-commissions. MONUC flew Pastor Runiga to meet Nkunda overnight, at Nkunda's invitation and with Kabilia's blessing. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The second day of the Conference on Peace, Security, and Development in North and South Kivu, January 7, proved insufficient to finalize procedural issues, despite efforts over the past ten days by Conference president, Father Apollinaire Malu Malu, and his core organizers to overcome obstacles. Accreditation of the 800 attendees is not complete, because the responsible entity, the Independent Electoral Commission office in Goma, is unable to produce identification cards en masse, though Malu Malu told representatives of the international community in an evening meeting January 7 that the Conference would begin to get down to substance even if all members were not yet accredited. Armed groups, he said, were already fully accredited.

¶3. (SBU) Malu Malu said that rules of procedure would be agreed on in the course of January 8, perhaps to include final decisions on voting and immunity. Malu Malu was evasive about how long the Conference was likely to go on beyond the projected closing date of January 14 but said that his limited budget would necessitate a limited delay, entailing possibly leaving undecided issues to a separate conclave or commission. His present budget of four million dollars would carry to only January 14. It already represented a considerable expansion over the original forecast, given the doubling of numbers of members and of the number of days of the Conference.

¶4. (SBU) On voting, Malu Malu and his colleagues have apparently decided that the best approach is to avoid direct voting if possible and go for consensus. Failing consensus, he contemplates an "appeal" to the external facilitators -- viz., members of the international community present in Goma -- who will perform the role of suggesting a way out of any impasse that arises. Malu Malu did not confer with the international community in advance about this procedure nor did he discuss it in detail in the evening meeting. Failing success with external facilitation, according to his legal assistant Bob Kabamba, he contemplates that a two-thirds vote will be required on substantive issues, or a majority vote on less sensitive technical issues.

¶5. (SBU) Once procedural issues are dealt with, the plan continues to be for the Conference to meet in plenary, followed by meetings of the two groups (North and South Kivu) separately in sub-plenary,

followed by meetings of the eight commissions: peace (7 sub-commissions for each province), security (11), humanitarian affairs (6), and development (8), for a total of 64 sub-commissions.

¶6. (SBU) EU Special Envoy Roeland van de Geer underlined the importance that the international community attached to the Conference and asked Malu Malu's and Foreign Minister Mbusa's perspective on how the international community could be most helpful. Mbusa said that its contribution was essential in every area. Van de Geer said that he and his colleagues had informally met earlier in the day with Mai Mai and Pareco (who were staying at, and openly milling around, the Karibou Hotel) and would meet them and other groups, if Malu Malu and Mbusa agreed, in order to emphasize the importance of the Conference and unacceptability of further armed conflict. Malu Malu and Mbusa interposed no objection. Belgian Special Envoy Jozef Smets stressed the importance of devoting significant time, perhaps a day, to the issue of sexual violence and asked how Malu Malu planned to deal with the FDLR. Malu Malu said that the majority of people involved in the Conference wanted to invite the FDLR to the Conference, realizing the need for a political way forward, and he was seeking an indirect way to accomplish the goal. As for other armed groups, Mai Mai were already involved in workshops but would not be involved in meetings in the large hall; meanwhile, he was in constant contact with the CNDP delegation.

¶7. (SBU) Presidential Foreign Affairs Advisor Marcellin Chissambo, present at the evening meeting (and, he says, in Goma "for the duration"), noted that there was not only a CNDP delegation in Goma, the CNDP was effectively involved at the highest level ("bureau") of the Conference (Emmanuel Kamanzi and Azil Tanzi). Chissambo, Malu Malu, and Mbusa all noted that the prominence of Tutsis at the

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highest levels of the Conference had produced keen resentment among other groups but had not netted much gratitude from the Tutsis, who were themselves badly divided. Chissambo affirmed that Bishop Jean-Marie Runiga had traveled overnight to meet Nkunda, at Nkunda's invitation and Kabilia's request (conveyed through Chissambo). Separately, MONUC Political Affairs chief Christian Manahl told poloff that MONUC saw Runiga's effort as useful, if not in the same category of importance as U.S. intermediation via Special Envoy Shortley. (Note: Runiga has delivered a written request for U.S. financial assistance, patterned on his similar request to MONUC, which poloff will forward to Embassy Kinshasa. End note.)

¶8. (SBU) At opening of day, poloff received a delegation of Hunde and Nianga legislators from Walikale and Masisi (four national and four provincial), who provided an insight into the extent of dissatisfaction in some quarters. They said that their constituents did not want them to attend the Conference, seeing it as a vehicle for special treatment of the Tutsi community. They bristled at the characterization of the Tutsis as an oppressed minority, saying that it was they who were the truly oppressed minorities of North Kivu. They expressed particular anxiety at the prospect of movement of Tutsi refugees to their territories, claiming that a genuine effort at identification would show that few had any genuine basis for claiming a right to come to Masisi or Walikale. They characterized the U.S. as "Nkunda's backer," under the logic that as the U.S. backed Rwanda, and as Rwanda saw Masisi, Walikale, and Rutshuru as its "natural" hinterland and had established Nkunda there, therefore the U.S. backed Nkunda. As for the FDLR, they said that they had problems only when the FDLR was being attacked; however, they were eager for the FDLR to leave their area and go to Rwanda (they blamed Rwanda for blocking this return). Poloff attempted to steer the conversation toward how to ensure a positive result in the Conference, without any success. The delegates' entire focus was on historical injustice and fear of further dispossession.

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